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TAGS: PREL IR SY EUN SR KV SW

SUBJECT: SWEDISH MFA POLITICAL DIRECTOR ON IRAN, BALKANS,
SYRIA, AND EASTERN PARTNERSHIP

Classified By: Ambassador Matthew Barzun, Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

(C) Over lunch with the Ambassador February 24, MFA Political Director Bjorn Lyrvall offered Swedish views on key topics:

--On EU internal politics, he complained that Brussels was turned inward as major players scurried around trying to line up good jobs. Sweden is pushing for competence to be a factor in hiring for the new External Action Service rather than just proportional representation of Member States, hoping in that way it will get more than the 10-15 slots that would otherwise be likely. Sweden is also pushing its PSC Ambassador, Olof Skoog, for the new, post-Lisbon, PSC Chairmanship. Baroness Ashton's staff are grateful that the Swedes are quietly passing them papers on a full range of topics.

--On Iran, Lyrvall stated that "our people" are looking at the possibility of "human rights-based sanctions" to complement proliferation-based sanctions, although it was still unclear whether a legal basis for such could be found. He reiterated well-known European concerns that absent a UN Security Council resolution, any actions the EU might take to target "the transportation or insurance sectors, for example" would be quickly undercut by China.

--On Serbia, Stockholm was concerned about a series of unhelpful comments coming out of Belgrade, including by President Tadic and Patriarch Irinej. Such comments could not be formally linked to Serbia's EU accession process, but Sweden wanted Serbian leaders to be aware that their "actual policies" would be judged by the comments Serbian leaders made in advance of Serbia's EU application review, scheduled for June. Lyrvall added that he expected the "Dutch position" would be upheld and that the next report of ICTY Chief Prosecutor Brammertz would have to be "at least as positive as last time" if progress on Serbia's accession were to continue.

--Turning to Kosovo, Lyrvall said Sweden expected the ICJ advisory opinion would be "gray," neither finding Kosovo's declaration of independence illegal nor sanctioning the move.

Sweden worries that such a ruling will only "complicate" matters.

--On the EU-Syria Association Agreement, Lyrvall stated that the draft text included human rights conditions demanded by the Dutch. However, in the six months since Damascus was presented with the draft text, there had been no movement. Rather, the Syrians say they are still reviewing the agreement, quietly pointing out that they were "not the demandeur" in the situation.

--Turning to the Eastern Partnership, Lyrvall said that when the project was first launched, Moscow had offered no objection. By last spring and summer however, the Russians had reached out to Spain "and other friends" saying they needed to be more involved, but by late autumn Moscow had again become silent on the matter. Although the EU had offered Russia a chance to participate in one Partnership

activity in which Georgia had no interest, the Georgians immediately blocked Russian participation when they became aware of the possibility.

BARZUN